



City of Santa Barbara  
Fire Prevention Bureau  
**High Fire Hazard Area Requirements**  
**Minimum Brush Clearance Standards**

Vegetation within Santa Barbara's "*High Fire Hazard*" areas, native or otherwise, must be maintained to create an effective fuelbreak by thinning dense vegetation and removing dry brush, flammable vegetation and combustible growth from areas within **100 feet** of all buildings or structures. Adhering to these requirements will decrease the destructive impact of wildfire. It will minimize structure loss and increase the safety of firefighters protecting your home.

***You Must Annually***

- ✓ Cut and remove hazardous brush, shrubs, and flammable vegetation such as dry grass and weeds within **100 feet** of any structure and within **2 inches** of the ground.
- ✓ Clear brush from streets and driveways both horizontally and vertically along your property. Flammable vegetation must be cleared on each side of a street or driveway for a distance of **10 feet** and a vertical distance of **13 feet, 6 inches**. Vegetation must be cut to within **2 inches** of the ground. This applies to your public or private driveway and any public or private streets that border your property.
- ✓ Remove dead wood, trim the lower branches, and limb all live trees to **6 feet** above the ground (or as much as possible with younger, smaller trees), especially trees adjacent to buildings.
- ✓ Trim tree limbs back a minimum distance of **10 feet** from any chimney opening.
- ✓ Remove all dead trees from your property.
- ✓ Maintain the roof of all structures free of leaves, needles or other vegetative debris.
- ✓ Legally dispose of all cut vegetation, including any debris left from previous tree trimming and brush removal. Cut vegetation may be chipped and spread throughout the property as a ground cover, up to **12 inches** in depth, and at least **30 feet** from any structure.

***Exceptions***

**Shrubs, hedges, and bushes may be retained throughout the 100 feet, provided:**

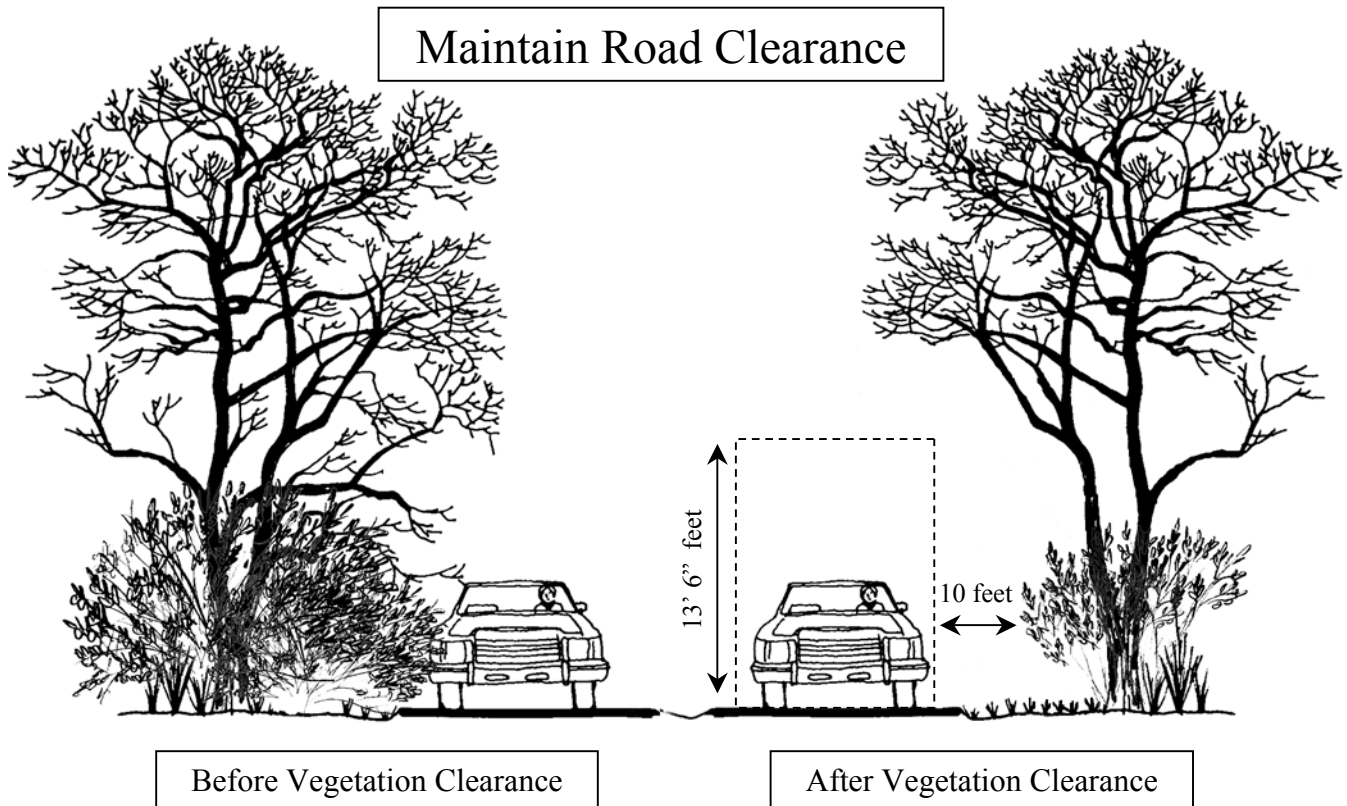
- ✓ They are spaced at least **18 feet** from other shrubs, bushes or structures.
- ✓ They are maintained free of dead wood and litter and trimmed at least **2 feet** up from the ground, or **1/3 of their height**, whichever is less.
- ✓ They do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire to a structure.

**Oak trees and other native specimen trees may be retained throughout the 100 feet, provided:**

- ✓ All dead wood is removed and lower branches are trimmed and limbed to **6 feet** above the ground.
- ✓ They do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire to a structure.

***Special Considerations***

- ✓ The Fire Department supports increasing the distance of defensible space beyond the 100 foot requirement on slopes greater than 20 percent. Before completing this work, contact the Fire Department (564-5702) for approval.
- ✓ When thinning vegetation and removing dry brush avoid creating erosion problems, causing siltation or pesticide contamination into creeks or drainages, and damaging the habitat of protected wildlife species. Contact the Fire Department (564-5702) for advice regarding erosion control.
- ✓ If you need to remove a tree greater than 4 inches in diameter you must contact the Parks and Recreation Department (564- 5433) to obtain a permit.



Maintaining horizontal and vertical vegetation clearance along public and private streets bordering your property and your driveways ensures safe evacuation during a wildfire. It also enables firefighters to respond safely to protect your property.